

against girls.

The court heard the pensioner was jailed for two-and-a-half years in 2005 for sexually touching four children – two aged eight,

problems, but accepted he would have to continue his daily treatment in jail.

Judge John Lodge said: "You got into a friendship with this family

After the hearing, the victim's mother said she felt the sentence was too short, and believed Norman would reoffend following his release from prison.

■ Deceit – Alan Norman, 71, told a family his previous conviction was for drugs when it was for touching children

60 new traveller pitches not for Dale Farm group

BASILDON Council has hinted for the first time it may create 60 new traveller pitches by 2011.

Yet this does not mean they will be alternative homes for those facing eviction at Dale Farm, Crays Hill, and Hovefields, Wickford.

Dawn French, council head of planning, said if the council allocates land it would be for a number of small sites, not a huge camp.

She wrote in a letter to campaigner Grattan Puxon: "I have also clearly stated it was most unlikely land would be allowed for 60 pitches together."

The council is required to provide 62 pitches by 2011, following a Government ruling.

But council leader Tony Ball said:

"Only if we are forced to provide them would this happen, as we would not allow another large site."

Mr Puxon argues if the council does have to meet the quota, it should put on hold the eviction so people at Dale Farm and Hovefields could move there.

However, Mrs French explained

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any new sites could be a long way off, and she warned finding alternative sites was not part of ongoing eviction negotiations.

She added: "I have repeatedly informed you there can be no undertakings regarding allocated land."

"Site allocation is not the basis of any discussions with the Dale Farm group."

Meanwhile human rights organisations from Bangladesh, Egypt, Germany and the United States have contacted the council urging it to put the eviction on hold until alternatives are found.

Mr Ball added: "We listen to any groups, but this won't change our position. We are dealing with UK law."

Looking for lost children

THURROCK council wants to track down the borough's "lost" children.

The authority is trying to find out how many under-16s and young adults with disabilities are in private foster care.

A private carer is someone who has a child living with them for more than a month when they are not a relative or legal guardian.

Sue MacPherson, the council's cabinet member for children's services, said: "It is not unusual for children to spend time out of the family home with friends or relatives."

"These stays can go on for longer periods than originally planned."

"The council is deeply concerned about its young people and must be notified of these situations by the child's parents, the carer, and anyone else making the arrangement."

"This is a legal obligation to parents, who remain responsible for their children."

The Social Care Department has a legal requirement to ensure privately-fostered children's welfare is safeguarded.

The child's carers are obliged to notify the department of their role.

For more information call the fostering team on 01375 652618.

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